

# But Feels Good On Back Benches He Tells House

## Doubts if Any 'Lame Ducks' Will Pass Up In- demnity

### CAUTIOUS ON INTEREST

## Criticizes Premier and Thinks Tories' Chances Are Dwindling

His political philosophy unshaken, W. E. N. Sinclair, K.C., told the Ontario Legislature yesterday that he stood by his 1933 "co-operation" speech, which lost him the House leadership of the Liberal Party.

"Comfortable."

In his first public comment on his new back-bench status, Mr. Sinclair found his present position "comfortable," proclaimed himself "a Liberal always, although some may wonder what a Liberal is in these days." His contribution to the Address debate was marked further by opposition to any reduction in interest rates, doubt as to the constitutionality of Premier Henry's subamendment to the Address, and



W. E. N. Sinclair.

whimsical comment on the Government's beer policy.

**Flickering.**

Mr. Sinclair launched at once, in ironical vein, into his remarks on the new and back-bench seat he occupies in the House. "Now," he said, "that the long-heralded 'fierce attacks on the Government' have been made, now that the big guns have fired, we, the lesser lights on the back benches, may flicker as best we can." Twenty years ago he had stood in this room to make speeches, possibly from the very row in which he now stood; it was pleasant in age to return to the haunts of youth. He was very comfortable where he was, speaking from a back bench.

"I was a Liberal always, and I'm a Liberal still," he declared. "I'm rated as a Liberal in the Parliamentary handbook, although some may wonder what a Liberal is in these days of change, evolution and development. I believe that Liberalism, in the hands of the rank and file of the party, to be of wonderful service to the Province."

After some remarks on the riding of South Ontario's representation in the House, he launched into his speech proper. "And it's all home-made stuff," he assured the Legislature. "I've no staff helping me to get up my speeches."

This, he said, was the Provincial Parliament's last session. Some said that it was illegal, no session at all, but he imagined that all the M.P.P.'s, when the session was over, would gather at the King's Printer's office to claim their cheques. "There'll be no duck so lame he can't get down to the King's Printer," he said. As for the next session, there was no use singing "Shall We Gather at the River?" when that riverbank now would accommodate only 90 instead of 112.

**Re Subamendments.**

Questioning, then, the constitutionality of Premier Henry's subamendment to the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Sinclair noted that the Premier had objected to the Progressive subamendment as too similar to the Liberal amendment. "The twins looked too much alike," Mr. Sinclair put it. For himself, he had intended to vote for Progressive Leader Nixon's subamendment, ruled out by the Speaker. Worse than that, he would have no opportunity to vote for Liberal House Leader McQuibban's amendment either. The Premier's subamendment, which expresses thanks for the encouraging economic outlook, was so framed, said Mr. Sinclair, that if the Opposition were voting on it elsewhere they would accept it. "But party politics, being what they are, we'll vote against it."

Premier Henry interposed: "Mr. Speaker, there's no need for this."

"You don't know everything," replied Mr. Sinclair, significantly.

The Henry amendment, he was convinced, was not permissible under Parliamentary rules, in that it was merely a modified restatement of one clause in the original motion. If the Nixon amendment did not qualify, then Mr. Henry's qualified to a still lesser extent. He would vote with the Opposition against it, because

really the vote meant nothing at all.

The contents of the Speech from the Throne were not such as to produce acrimonious debate. No mention was made of beer, though probably it was included among the legislation "for various other purposes" to be brought down. When the weather became a little more suited to beer-drinking, then beer would be discussed in the House.

More seriously, he impressed on the House the importance of the recent Dominion-Provincial Conference at Ottawa, when Government representatives, regardless of partisan nor local interest, met and decided to strive co-operatively for the good of the Dominion. Ontario, for instance, had recognized the necessity of keeping British Columbia solvent, in the interests of the credit of all Canada. It was a recognition of the belief that each was, to some extent at least, "his brother's keeper."

Coming then to a statement of his own political case, Mr. Sinclair stated his philosophy as: "If I can show how I can do better than those in office are doing anything, I'm entitled to a hearing. If not, then I've no reason to criticize."

Last session he had offered to help those who were trying to help the people at a difficult time. He had learned that it was a mistake to be charitable; he was charged with political heresy. He quoted from the newspapers of last year to show what his attitude had been in that speech in which he made his offer of co-operation and drew down upon himself the wrath of the Liberal Party. "I stand by what I said on that occasion. Wasn't that a true and right position for any public man to take if he seeks to stand by his oath of office?"

"If I am misjudged, my conscience is clear. I hope any effort or sacrifice on my part may be of service to the people when the battle is over."

**On "Lame-Duck" Session.**

Reverting to the "lame-duck" session, he could not, as a lawyer, argue that this fifth session of the Legislature was illegal. The British North America Act gave the Governmen-

power to extend the term; but a fifth session for the Legislature which made the change was a matter for the people to rule upon.

The Government, he said, had done things that he would not have done had he been in power; also it had had some bad breaks that he would not want to have. Possibly its chances of re-election were better last June than they would be in the coming one. At any rate, the extra session was just as valuable to the Opposition as to the Government. The Opposition last year had been called "woefully weak." If that were true, the opportunity to correct the situation was being given now. In this regard he recalled preparing almost single-handed the Liberal handbook for last election, forming a comprehensive platform which was still in use by the Liberal Party.

He warned that the reduction in interest rates advocated from Opposition quarters involved more than appeared on the surface. The time to get a low rate was when the bargain was made, but afterward the only solution was refunding, and holders would be unwilling to accept the reduction. Luckily, some of the Province's high-rate bonds soon would expire. A lower interest rate was desirable if it could be arranged without impairment of Provincial credit. Any revolutionary methods would have effects similar to the moratorium legislation which now kept people from investing their money in mortgages. He reminded the House, too, that many Provincial bonds were held in trust for widows and orphans, who, naturally, would find their incomes reduced.

All groups applauded as Mr. Sinclair concluded his speech.